



DEPARTMENT of  
CONSERVATION

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This first edition of the *Conservation Journal* marks a new chapter in our external communications. It is our hope this newest publication will provide increased information about the department's services. We welcome your comments and invite you to view the *Journal* and other products on our home page: [www.consrv.ca.gov](http://www.consrv.ca.gov)

# CONSERVATION JOURNAL

## State's Farmland Grants Aid in Long-Term Growth Planning

California leads the nation in two impressive but potentially conflicting statistics: population growth and agricultural production.

The state's economic resurgence and resultant increase in residents are a blessing and a challenge to local planners. Voluntary land conservation projects such as the state-run Agricultural Land Stewardship Program are invaluable tools in the effort to keep vital farmland in production.

The ALSP, administered by the Department of Conservation, provides grants that help in the acquisition of development rights on high-value, strategically located farmland. The department is accepting proposals for the \$13.7 million currently available for grants.

"We have substantial funding in place, now we need to reach out to the landowners and local land trusts to put this money to work," said Mary Nichols, secretary of the Resources Agency. "This program is a key tool as California seeks to balance population growth, economic development and preservation of the nation's No. 1 farm economy."

ALSP grants are used in combination with local and sometimes federal funds. Landowners who participate in the program receive a one-time payment in exchange for the development rights on their land. Payment is based on an appraisal of the land that determines the difference between its development value and its agricultural value. The development rights are typically held by a local land trust in perpetuity. The landowners maintain ownership of the acreage and agree to keep it in agricultural production.

### Why preserve farmland?

People and agriculture each require land, but it is something we would seem to have plenty of in



*Artichoke fields forever... a voluntary land conservation project in Monterey.*

California. Of the state's 100 million acres, 29 million are devoted to agricultural use. More than four million of those acres are prime farmland.

At the same time, state Department of Finance data show California grew by 574,000 people in 1997, or 1.77 percent — tops in the nation. State and federal officials agree that California, with a current population of 33 million, is likely to see its population grow to 50 million by 2025.

California's Central Valley is by far its richest agricultural area, and among the most susceptible to urbanization of farmland due to its relative low cost and, in many cases, proximity to growing cities. However, the Central Valley is not the only region struggling to preserve its agricultural underpinnings.

Issues arising at the local level pit agricultural production against the need for housing and other economic development throughout the state, from the north San Francisco Bay area, down the central and south coast, and into the agricultural regions of San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego and Imperial counties. Development pressure is felt in smaller rural communities throughout the state as well, communities whose economies are based on agriculture.

*see Farmland, page 2*



## Land Conservation Tools

*The California Department of Conservation administers or supports a number of programs designed to promote orderly growth in coordination with agricultural endeavors. Key tools available for land conservation planning are:*

### **The Land Conservation (Williamson) Act**

Provides tax incentives for landowners who keep large tracts of land in agricultural or open space use. The law has been widely credited with discouraging "leapfrog" development, and some 16 million acres, one half of the state's agricultural landscape, are currently enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Contracts typically run 10 years, and automatically renew every year unless the land-owner begins the 10-year process of nonrenewal. Under certain circumstances, contracts also can be cancelled at a price equal to 12.5 percent of the development value. In August of 1998, SB 1182 was signed into law. It allows landowners to convert existing Williamson Act contracts to 20-year "Farmland Security Zone" contracts that provide additional tax incentives.

### **The Agricultural Land Stewardship Program**

Provides state grants that are used in conjunction with federal and/or local matching funds to purchase permanent conservation easements. This program complements the Williamson Act by focusing on farmland where long-term development pressures overwhelm tax incentives. The ALSP received a total of \$2.9 million in its first two years and made possible easements in Fresno, Monterey, Yolo, Solano and Ventura counties. The 1998/99 state budget made \$13.7 million available for the program.

### **SB 1240**

Another 1998 law is SB 1240, which establishes a bridge between the Williamson Act and the ALSP. The new law allows land to be taken out of Williamson Act contract under certain circumstances if the landowner places a permanent conservation easement on a separate, but larger and more valuable parcel of land approved locally and by the state.

### **Resource Conservation Districts**

The department administers grants and provides technical assistance for the 103 local resource conservation districts in the state. Grant funding for 1997-98 was \$120,000.

### **California Conservation Partnership**

The department contributes to the California Conservation Partnership, a coalition of federal, state and local land conservation stakeholders focused on finding solutions to land use and watershed dilemmas. One of the team's purposes is to build strength among the resource conservation districts to carry out effective resource conservation locally.

### **Farmland Mapping and Monitoring**

On a county-by-county basis, the department tracks conversion of farmland to other uses and provides the information to local planners as a tool to help with future planning decisions. The latest report, covering the years 1994-96, was released on August 19, 1998.

*Farmland, from page 1*

In 1995, the Legislature passed the ALSP to address concerns that California's farmland was diminishing too rapidly in the face of population expansion. During a two-year period ending in 1996, more than 58,000 acres were converted from agricultural to urban uses, according to the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Total statewide urbanization for the two years includes nearly 18,000 acres that previously were irrigated farmland.

Through its first three years, the ALSP administered grants worth \$2.7 million and facilitated easements on thousands of acres of farmland in Monterey, Fresno, Solano, Yolo, Ventura and San Joaquin counties.

The ALSP serves as a long-term complement to the Williamson Act, which protects 16 million acres of agricultural and open space land under 10-year contracts that provide tax incentives to willing landowners. Participating counties gain a powerful asset in long-term development planning, and compensation from the state to help offset lower tax revenues.

The ALSP focuses on farmland located where long-term development pressures overwhelm the benefits of lower taxes. When applying for a grant, a local government or land trust must determine which agricultural lands may be eligible for the program and submit documentation of the local government's long-term commitment to agricultural land conservation. The applying entity must also have matching funds equal to 5 percent of the grant or 10 percent of the assessed easement value. ■

*The Department of Conservation is accepting applications for ALSP grants throughout the year. Applications are available by calling (916) 324-0850, or on our home page: [www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/alsp/](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/alsp/)*



## DOGGR to Plug 600 Orphaned Wells

**T**hanks to a new law backed by industry and the Department of Conservation, increased funds will be available to mitigate the approximately 600 orphaned oil and gas wells in California over a five-year period.

A well is considered orphaned when the operator or owner goes out of business, leaving it idle and unattended, and there is insufficient financial assurance to plug the well. Such wells must be plugged because they pose a potential hazard to people and the environment.

“This law is important because it ensures that the state’s orphaned wells are plugged and abandoned properly, while at the same time making it likely there will be fewer wells orphaned in the future,” said William Guerard, state oil and gas supervisor.

“These wells usually don’t pose an immediate problem unless they’re leaking. But there is a concern that over time the casing can corrode and create a conduit for groundwater contamination.”

Generally, operators pay to plug non-productive wells. The work is done under state regulations administered by the DOC’s Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources.

The state requires operators to provide bonds — either to cover all their operations or on a per-well basis — before drilling. The bonds ensure that the public doesn’t bear the cost of plugging and abandoning a non-productive well.

The state well-plugging fund was established in 1977 to take care of orphaned wells. Assessments on oil and gas production, as well as fees imposed on long-term idle wells, provided the funds. According to Guerard, the average cost to properly plug and abandon a well is about \$16,000.

The new law, SB 1763, which takes effect in July, increases the authorized spending from \$500,000 to \$1 million per year for a five-year term. It is anticipated that this increased money, and the amount recouped from salvaging material at orphaned well sites, will cover the cost of properly plugging and abandoning the state’s current number of orphaned wells.

“SB 1763 was developed through a proactive approach by industry members, the Department of Conservation and the

U.S. Bureau of Land Management,” Guerard said. “It was a very good team effort on an important program.”

The Department of Conservation maintains a list of California’s orphaned wells, which are prioritized according to present environmental danger, potential for damage, and public safety and nuisance issues.

Modern engineering methods are used to plug wells, protecting the surface environment and underground waters.

**M**ost wells can be plugged in a few days. But there can be complications. Sometimes there are holes or corrosion in a well’s casing, or the well begins to leak. Especially deep wells with high pressure can present problems. Work can be delayed if debris such as tools, pumps and wood make entry difficult.

In late 1993, work went on around the clock for 11 days before the Lincoln Drilling No. 1 well in Kern County — leaking oil, water and gas at high pressures — was plugged and abandoned at a cost of nearly \$284,000. That’s the highest amount spent by DOGGR to plug an orphaned well.

### There is an alternative to plugging and abandoning orphaned wells — adoption.

SB 2007, signed into law in 1996, provides an incentive for operators to re-open idle or orphaned wells that may still be capable of producing worthwhile amounts of oil and gas resources. Operators are given a 90-day trial period on orphaned wells. They do not have to secure a bond for that period while determining whether producing the well is cost effective.

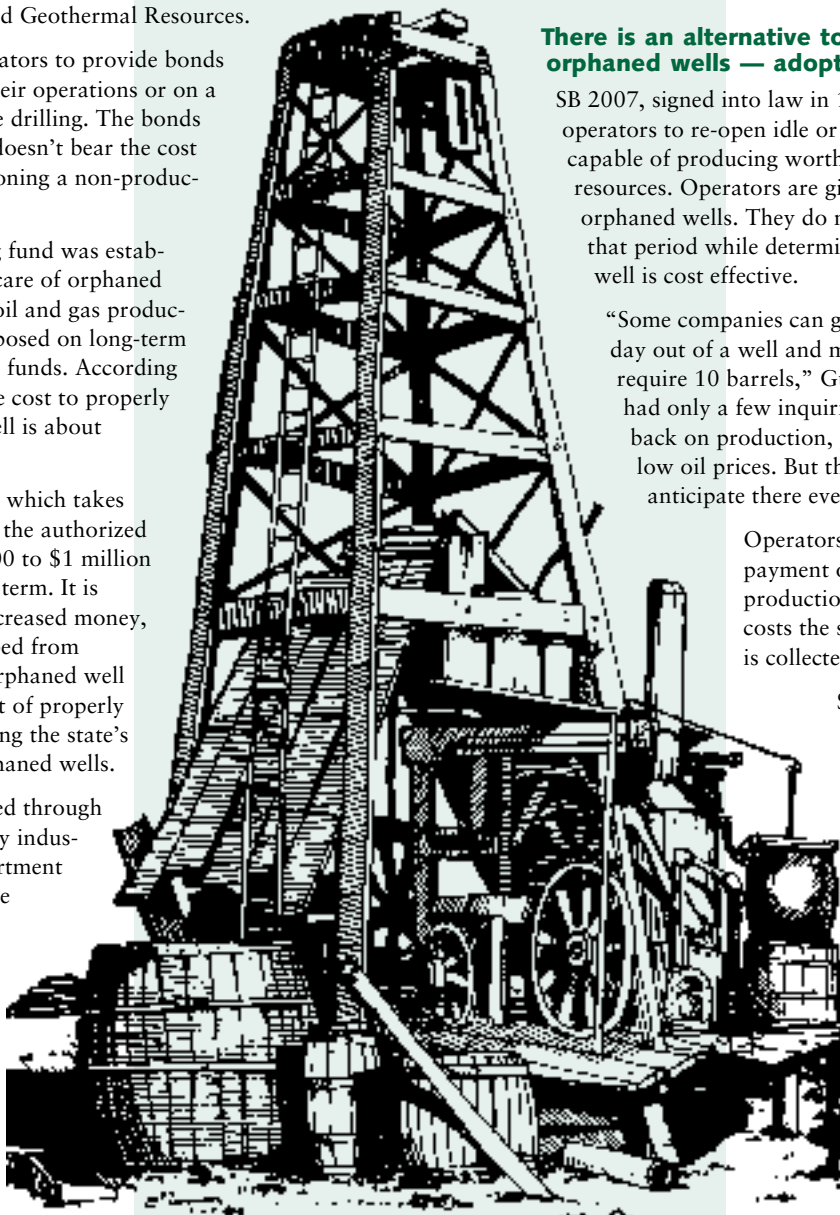
“Some companies can get two barrels (84 gallons) of oil a day out of a well and make money, while another may require 10 barrels,” Guerard explained. “So far, we’ve had only a few inquiries about bringing orphaned wells back on production, probably because of the current low oil prices. But that’s a cyclical thing, and we anticipate there eventually will be more interest.”

Operators can get a 10-year exemption from payment of the per-barrel assessment on production for restarting a well. The subsidy costs the state nothing, since no assessment is collected from orphaned wells.

SB 2007 provides an opportunity to convert environmental and public safety concerns into economic contributors. Also, operators who “adopt” wells ultimately become responsible for properly plugging and abandoning them.

“It’s a win-win situation,” Guerard said. ■

*California oil well,  
circa 1880*







*Recycle Rex and reporter Amanda Ravenscroft of "Kids Clubhouse" shown on San Jose's KTEH-TV, discuss away-from-home recycling.*

## Department Launches Campaign

There's a reason so many new cars have cup holders. Everybody, it seems, is on the go these days.

With so much time spent traveling to and from work, school, soccer practice and the myriad events that fill the average schedule, it's only natural that Californians take beverages along for the ride. Which raises the question:

**What happens to aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers that otherwise might get recycled at home?**

To help ensure those "on the road" beverage containers end up in recycling bins instead of trashcans, the Department of Conservation will continue to focus its public outreach on away-from-home recycling opportunities. The campaign will build on previous efforts to increase the number of recycling bins in public places and encourage consumers to recycle when they are out and about.

"The growth in use of the plastic, single-serve container speaks volumes about the lifestyle choices people are making," said Carol Nelson, acting chief of the state's beverage container recycling program. "These 16- and 20-ounce containers are re-sealable, so they're convenient to carry in backpacks, gym bags or on family outings. It's important that when people are away from home, they remember to recycle plastic, aluminum and glass beverage containers."

Research conducted by the Department of Conservation in 1998 showed that 90 percent of Californians had recycled beverage containers at some point, and that a majority makes it a regular part of their lives. Those who recycle tend to fall into one

## Grants Foster Grass-Roots Recycling Efforts

As part of an on-going statewide effort to maximize beverage container recycling by consumers, the Department of Conservation issues \$2.3 million in recycling grants to local non-profit and government entities each year.

The grants come from revenue generated through the California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act — specifically, from funds left unclaimed as a result of unredeemed California Redemption Value beverage containers — and thus are awarded at no cost to the state's general fund.

"The grants allow us to tap into Californians' energy and creativity to find new avenues for capturing plastic, glass and aluminum beverage containers," said Carol Nelson, acting chief of the state's beverage container recycling program. "We can also request that grant proposals address specific target areas, such as youth education or increasing the recycling infrastructure."

Infrastructure, in the form of additional beverage container collection bins, was the focus of grants awarded in the 1997/98 and 1998/99 grant cycles. A second set of grants from 1998/99 funds will emphasize projects

designed to increase consumer recycling of the increasingly popular 16- and 20-ounce single-serve plastic containers. Recycling of these containers has not kept pace with their ascendancy in the marketplace.

The Department's Division of Recycling administers the grants program with a goal of increasing and maintaining beverage container recycling in California and abatement of beverage container litter.

Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies, including school districts, individual schools,

special districts and joint power authorities to implement beverage container recycling projects. Winners are selected through a competitive scoring process.

Each year the department solicits applications to create or expand beverage container recycling collection, recycling infrastructure and recycling outreach/education programs. Previous projects have included implementation of beverage container collection systems, community outreach and education, litter abatement and recycling economic development.

# to Focus on Away-from-Home Recycling

or both of the following categories: they believe it is the socially responsible thing to do and/or they value the California Redemption Value (CRV) they paid at the point of purchase and want to recapture it.

The research also showed, however, that many people felt they had slacked off in their recycling in recent years. This might help explain the drop in California's overall recycling rate on CRV beverage containers from 82 percent in 1992 to 76 percent in 1997. The 6 percent drop represents roughly 500 million additional beverage containers in any given year ending up in the trash instead of being recycled.

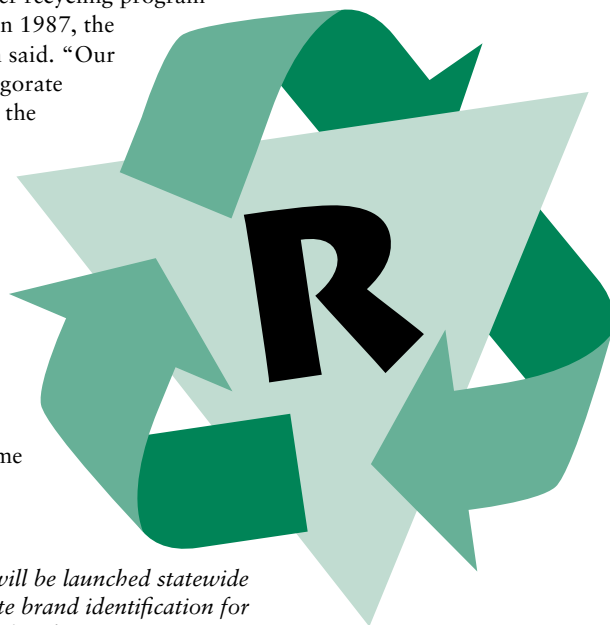
"The challenge is to reinvigorate those who are already apt to recycle, as well as increase awareness of recycling opportunities for people with busy lifestyles," Nelson said.

The Department of Conservation's marketing-communications team will take a multi-faceted approach to spreading the away-from-home recycling message. The plan includes statewide news media outreach, advertising in the four largest metropolitan areas, potential partnerships with private companies and development of an easy-to-spot recycling emblem for placement on recycling bins.

Additionally, the department will emphasize "away-from-home" recycling projects in considering proposals for the \$2.3 million in recycling grants it awards to nonprofit agencies annually (see story below).

"As the state's beverage container recycling program has matured since its inception in 1987, the landscape has changed," Nelson said. "Our outreach strategies aim to reinvigorate recycling in California and raise the recycling rate."

More information on beverage container recycling in California can be obtained through the department's recycling program at:  
801 K Street  
Mail Stop 18-58  
Sacramento, 95814  
or by calling 1-800-RECYCLE;  
or through the department's home page at: [www.consrv.ca.gov](http://www.consrv.ca.gov) ■



*This emblem will be launched statewide to promote brand identification for recycling beverage containers.*

## 1998/99 NONPROFIT GRANT AWARDS

Grant funds are intended to benefit the public and are not intended for private gain or profit. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 14581, subject to the availability of funds, the amount of the non-profit grants is \$2.3 million plus an annual cost of living adjustment. Since 1988, nearly \$23 million has been awarded to fund various nonprofit and governmental agency projects.

The department will issue a request for proposals for the 1999/2000 grants later this year. ■

University of California, San Francisco	\$48,984	Sonoma State University Academic Foundation Inc.	\$93,860
California State University, Sacramento	\$36,635	City of Lake Forest	\$67,928
California State University, San Francisco	\$42,618	University of California, Davis	\$40,127
City of Pittsburg	\$40,000	ASUC/File 13 Recycling Project	\$29,770
Calaveras County	\$64,067	City of Half Moon Bay	\$48,290
UC Extension, Santa Cruz	\$14,698	22nd District Agricultural Association	\$43,000
Associated Students, California State University, Chico	\$40,125	San Jose State University Foundation	\$104,759
Glenn County Public Works	\$72,301	City of Palm Desert and Palm Springs	\$116,430
Sacramento Food Bank Services	\$35,070	Clean Tahoe Program	\$55,364
Trinity County, Solid Waste Division	\$66,631	Costa Mesa Sanitary District	\$18,350
Marin Municipal Water District	\$2,670	City of Sacramento, Department of Public Works	\$18,806
Associated Students Inc., CSU Long Beach	\$98,998		
Nevada County	\$41,468		
City of Santa Monica, Solid Waste Division	\$23,906		
City of Placentia	\$13,089		
East Bay Conservation Corps	\$65,830		

*Note: The Department of Conservation plans to announce \$1 million in grant awards for projects that address recycling of single-serve plastic containers later this spring.*



## SEISMIC HAZARD ZONE MAPS RELEASED

The first round of the Department of Conservation's effort to map the earthquake-related problems of liquefaction and landslides in California is complete.

The final 24 of 39 seismic hazard zone maps covering 2,400 square miles in Southern California were released March 25.

The new maps, produced by the DOC's Division of Mines and Geology and now official after a

mandatory public review, cover all or parts of 83 cities in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Based on computer models, as well as analysis of existing geological mapping and thousands of engineering borings and elevation surveys, these maps are consulted when new construction is planned or property is sold. If an area is prone to liquefaction (failure of water-saturated soil in a quake) or landslides, steps can be taken to minimize the adverse impact on development.

Each map covers an area of approximately 60 square miles. The maps cover parts of Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange counties affected by the magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake in 1994, the most destructive in U.S. history. One additional map, released in 1997, covers part of San Francisco.

These maps are provided to local governments by DMG and are available on the Department of Conservation's web site, [www.consrv.ca.gov](http://www.consrv.ca.gov). They are available for review at the DMG's public information office at 107 S. Broadway in Los Angeles. The maps also can be purchased from:

**BPS Reprographic Services**  
149 Second Street  
San Francisco, 94103

The mapping program originally was funded by an earthquake insurance fund and building permit fees. In the early part of the decade, recession slowed construction and the earthquake insurance fund was canceled. However, DOC was able to continue the work with funds from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Another FEMA grant has expanded the mapping in Southern California (see story at right).



## New Round of Seismic Map-Making Unfolds

**T**he Department of Conservation, with the help of a federal grant, continues to map out a plan to help Californians be prepared when the ground starts to shake.

The DOC's Division of Mines and Geology already has produced seismic hazard maps covering heavily urbanized parts of Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties, as well as part of San Francisco (see sidebar).

With an additional \$10 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and \$3.3 million in state funds, the work will extend into Ventura, Oxnard and Camarillo in Ventura County; the Lancaster-Palmdale region of Los Angeles County; and the Orange County communities of El Toro, Mission Viejo, San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano. This new round of seismic hazard mapping will cover 3,000 square miles and be completed within five years. Additional state funds will be used to produce similar maps of other Bay Area communities.

"These maps trigger a process that identifies when more stringent building standards are necessary to ensure public safety," said State Geologist James F. Davis, chief of the Division of Mines and Geology. "Reducing the disastrous impact of earthquakes begins with knowing where the problems are."

**T**he DMG maps identify areas prone to liquefaction — the failure of water-saturated soil — and earthquake-induced landslides.

This work is mandated by the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, which was passed after the devastating 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

### DMG's seismic hazard maps have two important uses:

First, local government agencies consult them before allowing new development. If building is slated in a seismic hazard zone, permits must be withheld until the hazard at the site is investigated and any necessary mitigation measures are incorporated into the developer's plans.

Second, landowners can check the maps to determine whether their property is in a hazard zone. When selling, they must disclose the risk to potential buyers. The maps do not otherwise affect existing structures unless permits for major renovations are sought.

**P**roperty damage due to a landslide is difficult to prevent and is often total. While liquefaction can do major damage — about 20 homes in Simi Valley were heavily damaged due to shifting soil during the 1994 Northridge earthquake — steps can be taken to minimize it.

"A relatively small investment, maybe \$3,000 to reinforce the foundation of a new home, can help prevent much of the damage caused by liquefaction," Davis said. "In a home that could suffer several tens of thousands of dollars in damage, that's a very high benefit-to-cost ratio."

Seismic hazard maps have been produced before for selected areas or for special purposes. But DMG's maps use the latest computer technology to create predictive models and are the first seismic maps using a scale large enough (one inch equals 2,000 feet) to provide a detailed look at a large region.

Producing the maps involves a lot more than "X marks the spot." The department's experts examine up-to-date information about an area's surface and subsurface

*see Map-Making, back page*





### Filling in the Holes — an Inventory of Abandoned Mines

Who's minding the mines? The Department of Conservation is.

Work has begun to inventory California's abandoned and historic mines. It is estimated that there may be as many as 30,000 mine adits, pits, quarries, highwalls, and other mining features located throughout the state. The DOC is in the process of conducting a preliminary appraisal of the chemical and physical characteristics of these mines, and determine the potential for health and safety problems to the public or the environment.

"This is a big undertaking, but one that is important to California's health and safety," said Glenn Stober, assistant director of DOC's Office of Mine Reclamation.

So far, OMR teams have worked mainly in Yolo, Placer, Shasta, Nevada and Colusa counties. The first task, at the request of state and local government agencies, was to examine historical mining's impact on the Cache Creek watershed. Teams also have worked in the Bear River and Clear Creek watersheds. This month, OMR teams will conduct research and begin the inventory of the Merced River watershed.

OMR typically sends two-person teams into the field. The unit has specialists in biology, ecology, engineering, geology/hydrogeology, natural resources assessment and geographical information systems.

Mining is a big part of California's history, starting with the discovery of gold in 1848. The landscape is dotted with inactive, historic and abandoned mines in addition to active mines, which have produced and continue to produce commodities such as construction materials, gold and silver, mercury, copper, lead, zinc and rare earth minerals. Today, the mining industry is well regulated. Annual reports are filed for mining sites, and reclamation plans are required for all active mines. However, many old, abandoned mines are undocumented and hazardous.

Finding abandoned mines can be a challenge. The Office of Mine Reclamation uses data — including historical maps and aerial photos — provided by other state agencies, local governments, the U.S.G.S., and the Bureau of Land Management to help locate abandoned mines.

#### Help from the public is also appreciated.

The DOC has a toll-free hotline — 1-877-OLD-MINE (653-6463) — which Californians can call to report sites. The toll-free number has generated steady response since its inception in early July.

One such call was about a large home in Grass Valley starting to collapse into a sinkhole. It turns out the house may have been built near the entrance to a 1,800-foot mine shaft. Another call came from a property owner in Ione seeking help in assessing the effects a large copper mine has had on the local watershed.

When it comes to abandoned mines, the Department of Conservation urges you to "Stay Out and Stay Alive" — and call the toll-free number.



*A new house in Grass Valley is being undermined by the collapse of underground workings at a historic mine site.*

### STAY OUT, STAY ALIVE!

Abandoned mines are dangerous places. The very ground you walk on can be unsafe. There can be man-made and natural hazards. The smart thing to do if you come across an abandoned mine is call the Department of Conservation's toll-free number:

**1-877- OLD-MINE  
(1-877-653-6463)**

"Abandoned mines may seem intriguing, because there's a lot of history in them, but they're no place to go exploring," Stober said. "They can be very dangerous."

Old mine pits can have steep walls and loose rock. Deteriorated mine shafts can collapse or contain contaminated air. Other potential hazards common to old mine sites include water containing harmful substances, explosives, cyanide, rattlesnakes, diseased rodents, poisonous plants and deep pools of water.

When the ground is saturated by rain, the earth in and around abandoned mines is more likely to be unstable. Accidents can and do happen.

Last April in the old mining town of Acton, near Palmdale, a man was rescued after a 150-foot fall into a mine shaft he was exploring with his son. A man taking a rest during an all-terrain vehicle ride fell into a mineshaft in Campo Seco in Calaveras County.

Results of the initial phase of the OMR inventory of abandoned mines will be published in a report to the Legislature by June 30, 2000. ■

## HOW TO REACH US:

### California Department of Conservation

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Sacramento, CA 95814

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Office of Mine Reclamation  
(916) 323-9198

Public Affairs Office  
(916) 323-1886

State Mining & Geology Board  
(916) 322-1082

### Division of Land Resource Protection

Headquarters (916) 324-0850

### Division of Mines & Geology

Headquarters (916) 445-1825

Library (916) 327-1850

Publications (916) 445-5716

#### Field Offices:

Fortuna (707) 725-4413

Los Angeles (213) 620-3560

Redding (530) 224-4748

Riverside (UCR) (909) 275-0434

San Francisco (415) 904-7707

Santa Rosa (707) 576-2939

Willits (707) 459-7426

### Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources

Headquarters (916) 445-9686

#### Geothermal Field Offices:

El Centro (760) 353-9900

Sacramento (916) 323-1788

Santa Rosa (707) 576-2385

#### Oil & Gas Field Offices:

Bakersfield (661) 322-4031

Coalinga (559) 935-2941

Cypress (714) 816-6847

Sacramento (916) 322-1110

Santa Maria (805) 937-7246

Ventura (805) 654-4761

### Division of Recycling

Headquarters (916) 323-3836

Resource Center (916) 445-1490

#### Audits Branch Field Offices:

Los Angeles (310) 342-6100

Sacramento (916) 323-2792

San Diego (619) 525-4274

# CONSERVATION JOURNAL

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*Map-Making, from page 6*

geology, historic groundwater levels and damage, and geologic effects resulting from the Northridge and other California earthquakes. State-of-the-art geographic information system technology is used to turn the information into a three-dimensional view of the ground.

When the new round of mapping is complete in 2002, about a third of the state's highest-risk areas will be zoned for seismic hazards. About half the San

Francisco Bay region and portions of Humboldt, Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino counties will remain unmapped.

"We're grateful to FEMA for recognizing the importance of this ongoing project and providing the funding that will allow us to finish what we've started in Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange counties," Davis said. ■

## DMG Releases Alquist-Priolo Maps Covering Parts of Ventura County

Four official Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones maps covering parts of Ventura County were released May 1 by the Division of Mines and Geology. These fault-rupture maps help local planners and developers make future construction better able to withstand earthquakes. Residents also will be better informed about potential seismic hazards near existing homes.

If an earthquake is large enough or occurs at a shallow depth, movement on the fault can break through to the ground

surface and cause sudden, permanent ground displacement. This earthquake hazard is known as surface fault rupture. New construction cannot occur within 50 feet of a surface fault rupture.

The newest maps affect the cities of Simi Valley, Camarillo, Moorpark and parts of unincorporated Ventura County. This release concludes DMG's evaluation and zoning of the Simi-Santa Rosa fault zone. The western part of this fault was zoned a year ago. ■

## CALIFORNIA



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